



Utilities Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2024 at 12:00 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Alison Yurko, Fred Guitton, Leon Huffman, Mary Dipboye, Michael Poole, Paul Conway, Linda Lindsey,

Absent

Staff Present

1. Call to Order

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 23, 2024 1 minute

Mrs. Dipboye - said under Item C the budgeted amounts are not accurate. It was determined that the amounts refer to kilowatt-hours, not dollars, and minutes were amended to remove the dollar sign and replace it with kwh. Mr. Poole requested adding a discussion on solar rate structure under the upcoming Agenda items (scheduled for June meeting).

Mr. Conway asked that the minutes provide more information on what was discussed by the board.

Motion made by Mrs. Dipboye to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Conway. Motion unanimously with a 6-0 vote.

3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda): Three minutes allowed for each speaker

4. Action Items

- a. Streetlights/Decorative Lighting Policy - Mourad Belfakih 30 minutes

Mr. Belfakih started the conversation by letting the Board know we were looking at Dark Side Streetlights for their products. Then we would install lights for the whole city so

that everything is consistent, easy to stock, straight forward for our linemen to install. Previously, if the customers wanted streetlights, there would have to be a vote and there would have to be at least 66.5% voting yes in order to get the streetlights installed.

Mr. Poole would like to see some changes to the wording on the attachment that Mr. Belfakih provided, adding 150 to 200 feet apart from the posts.

Mr. Belfakih also mentioned that the lights would be the same design, different brightness and smart city ready, so that if the lights go out, Electric Utilities would be notified. There will be about 20 set up as an example in the city for the residents to see. When the new lights are installed, parking lot lights & church parking lot lights will also be included.

The question was asked, what is the annual amount for lighting service at this time. Mr. Hamil stated the residents pay about \$84,000 per year. This comes from the residential customers who have chosen to participate in getting the decorative lighting installed in their neighborhoods.

Now the policy will have to go before the Commission for budget approval and the reasons for changing it would be for safety, energy efficiency, standardization, etc. Once the policy is approved, the charges that the customers are paying now will be removed from their bills.

5. Non-Action Items

- a. Strategic Plan Water - David Zusi 15 minutes

Mr. Zusi stated that the strategic plan had been posted on the street, and he would like a member of the Board to volunteer to be on the selection committee. Mr. Conway accepted. Mr. Poole asked when the end date was for the selection process. Mr. Zusi responded on May 2nd and that was for the selection, presentation and ranking.

6. Staff Updates

- a. Electric Utility - Mourad Belfakih 5 minutes

Mr. Mourad discussed the report that was sent to the Board. Mileage is counted when overhead is taken down. Example: Project L we went 1.7 miles to get 300 feet, which could take 2 to 3 months.

Mr. Poole suggested having Clarissa write an article explaining how this all works so that customers can have a better understanding of how the underground is measured.

- b. Water & Wastewater Utility – David Zusi 5 minutes

Mr. Zusi spoke about the new lead and copper rules and how the city needs to document how much lead is in the system. The amount of testing is going up dramatically. Testing kits are being given to the customers, and instructions on how to use them. Not all customers are willing, so the city is paying \$50.00 to get our samples back. Lead in pipes above that level can be due to internal plumbing that was done, but was not done on the outside from house to meter.

Then we have septic to sewer conversions. There is a regulation from 2022 that if a new sewer system is put in, customers are required to hook up within a year. This is a significant cost to the customers. Mr. Zusi said they have been applying for grants for impact fees, costs on the private side to do connections full stem to stern project. Just under an \$800,000 grant was submitted to buy some emergency generators and a \$350,000 grant was submitted for an old lift station. It takes a lot of time submitting the paperwork which goes back & forth, then once it's all approved, it starts all over with FEMA.

c. Performance Measurement – Wes Hamil 5 minutes

Mr. Hamil had a discussion about the United Way funds and what is left as of December. More customers are using it after the restrictions were amended. The customer can get up to \$650.00 a year. The Board is concerned that the funds could run out.

The call volume was discussed and hold times. Mr. Hamil mentioned that customer service gets a lot of calls, which would be for water, permitting, electric department, etc.

d. Educational Campaign – Clarissa Howard 1 minute

No discussion, just the attachment that was attached.

e. EV Policy Rates - Lisa Vedder 5 minutes

Ms. Vedder has laryngitis and wrote a statement that Mr. Poole read. The analysis is complete, staff will be meeting next week to review options and finalize recommendations, and she will present at the next UAB meeting.

7. Board Comments

8. Upcoming Agenda Items

a. Electric Strategic Plan Update - Mourad Belfakih 1 minute

workshops in August, boards would like timelines from Dan

OUC contracts thru 2026 per wes

b. Solar rate structure (June)

1 minute

9. Adjournment

ATTEST:

Approved by the board on
/s/ Charisma Lowery, Board Secretary